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LIVING

Meet Samson — the biggest cat in NYC

By Jenn Hoffman

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Jonathan Zurbel, 42, social media director and DJ with his cat Samson in Zurbel's Williamsburg apartment. Stephen Yang

This is no itty bitty kitty.

A Brooklyn feline named Samson weighs in at a hulking 28 pounds, making him NYC's biggest puss.

"He's the [largest] cat in the city, and I welcome any challengers to step up," says Samson's owner, Jonathan Zurbel, 42, of the 4-year-old purebred Maine coon, who is an impressive 4 feet in length.

"He is by far the biggest cat I've heard of, especially in New York City," confirms Dr. Lisa Lippman, a Manhattan veterinarian who says that most cats she sees weigh around 10 pounds.

Maine coons are the largest breed of felines, but even they typically average only 15 to 25 pounds for males, according to Maine Coon Fancy, a Web site dedicated to the breed.

Not surprising given his hefty dimensions, Samson doesn't act like your average kitty.

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"He plays an excellent game of fetch, and he follows me from room to room and lays nearby, much like a dog," says Zurbel, a music producer.

But Samson draws the line at walking on a leash, which he doesn't enjoy. Instead, Zurbel wheels him around Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in a green pet stroller.

"He gets a lot of attention from strangers," says the proud papa, who adopted the cat from his older brother. He'd purchased the kitty from a breeder in southern New Jersey but had to give him up because of his work schedule.

"He draws crowds of photographers," Zurbel continues. "People's reactions are often, 'Holy s - - t! Is that a cat? That's a lion! Is it a bobcat?'"

Caring for such a colossal kitty isn't easy. He goes through up to six cans of wet food a day and several bags of dry food every week. He also goes through nearly 4 pounds of litter a week, and requires a \$120 grooming every few months to look his fluffy best.

Zurbel says the colossal kitty is worth the trouble.

"He's a very good cat," he says. "He's affectionate and sweet."

He's also a burgeoning star on Instagram, where his @catstradamus account has over 11,000 followers.

"If there's one thing that rules the Internet, it's cats," says Zurbel. "It didn't take long to build an organic following."

But even though he tips the scales at 28 pounds, don't call Samson a fat cat.

"He is genuinely long, broad, heavy and strong. He's big and well-proportioned. He's a real big Maine coon," says his groomer, Carolyn Ayala. "I have groomed many obese cats but [he's] not the same ... He is the Fabio of cats. He's a gentle giant."

More adorable snaps of Samson here:

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THICC = The Humungous Intelligent Coon Cat (photo by <u>catstradamus</u>)

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